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Security Council

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Letter dated 9 May 2001 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), I have the honour to convey the attached report on the international security presence in Kosovo covering the period from 1 to 31 March 2001.

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

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Annex

Monthly report to the United Nations on the operations of the Kosovo Force

1. Over the reporting period (1-31 March 2001) there were approximately 43,000 troops of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) in theatre, with no major changes in deployment since the last report.

2. The conditional and controlled return of forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into the Ground Safety Zone began during the reporting period. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia forces' entry into sector C (East) began on 14 March, and entry into sectors A and C (West) was completed on 26 March.

3. During March, over 130 Kosovo Albanian prisoners were released back into Kosovo at Gate 3 under ICRC arrangements as part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's prisoner release programme.

Security

4. During the reporting period, the escalation of violence in the northern region of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia[1] added a new dimension to the security situation in Kosovo. Acts of violence occurred in Mitrovica as well as across the province between ethnic groups. In addition, exchanges continued between ethnic Albanian armed groups and forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the Presevo Valley and in the Ground Safety Zone.

5. Following incidents in the northern part of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the border crossing points of Blace and Globocica were closed by that country's authorities on 4 March. The crossing points were reopened a few days later, but restrictions on movement imposed by the authorities affected both logistical resupply by KFOR to the Multinational Brigades, and contractors supporting UNMIK operations. On 7 March, KFOR soldiers who were targeted by members of the ethnic Albanian armed groups during a search operation in Mijak wounded two of the attackers in self-defence. On 29 March, KFOR forces in the Kosovo village of Krivenic came under fire by unknown forces. Two civilians were killed and 10 were injured during the attack.

6. Inter-ethnic intimidation continued during the reporting period. At the beginning of March, two elderly Kosovo Serbs were found beaten to death in Carakovce. Other violence included explosions or grenade attacks on several Kosovo Serb houses and other property in the areas of Vitina, Dragas and Gnijlane. On 23 March a Kosovo Albanian man was shot dead in Trnovac.

7. The situation in Mitrovica remains tense. On 1 March, there were two separate incidents. In the first, a crowd of 30 Kosovo Serbs threatened KFOR and UNMIK personnel when they stopped a car in the north of the town. The crowd attacked the KFOR and UNMIK vehicles with sticks. In the second incident, an UNMIK vehicle was surrounded by some 50 to 60 Kosovo Serbs who dragged an UNMIK policeman and a Kosovo Serb interpreter from the car. The interpreter fled, but the policeman was beaten and had his weapon and radio stolen. On 5 March near Srbica, KFOR forces cooperating with UNMIK police and members of the Kosovo Protection

[1] Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

Corps provided security during a commemorative gathering in Prekaze attended by 15,000 Kosovo Albanians, including 700 members of the Kosovo Protection Corps. Two men were wounded in the crowd, one of whom died from a shot to the head. On 9 March, several incidents ranging from stone throwing to starting fires took place in the "Three Towers" and "Montmartre" areas of the city. On 18 March, KFOR increased its presence to quell a tense situation following the sentencing of a Kosovo Serb to 30 days in jail for attacking two UNMIK policemen at the beginning of the month.

8. In a new initiative to improve the security situation in Mitrovica, meetings between the KFOR Commander, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia, Nebojsa Covic, and Mitrovica Serbs were held in conjunction with UNMIK and KFOR. A working group was established to begin planning on 13 March.

9. The last of the demonstrations against the "Nis Express" bombing incident was held in Gracanica (Multinational Brigade (Centre)) on 1 March, during which three Kosovo Albanian cars and a bus were stoned by the crowd. On 5 March, UNHCR restarted the first two of 11 bus routes in the enclaves near Gnjilane. On 19 March, KFOR and UNMIK arrested five Albanians suspected of involvement in the "Nis Express" incident.

10. A riot of 200 to 300 Kosovo Serbs occurred in Partes on 12 March, when three vehicles were set on fire. Daily demonstrations of large numbers of Kosovo Albanians were held peacefully and, in the last week of the reporting period, in Decane, Pristina, Prizren, Glogovac, Kamenica, Kosovo Polje and Srbica, Kosovo Albanians demonstrated in support of the actions of ethnic Albanian armed groups in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or against the Krivenik incident.

11. Regarding other activities, on 4 March, Multinational Specialized Unit personnel seized 32 tons of cigarettes in a warehouse in Pristina, the caretaker was arrested, and three people were reported to the investigating judge

12. During the period, KFOR troops uncovered and confiscated significant amounts of weapons, ammunition and explosives, ranging from rifles to rockets and mines, in or near Letnica, Kraljane, Gnjilane, Patina, Brezna, Vitina, Donje Zlokcane and Dabedic Mahala. At least 18 Kosovo Albanians involved in the incidents were detained. The weapons destruction programme will resume once the necessary repairs to the weapons destruction facility have been undertaken.

Illegal border activity

13. KFOR troops continued to provide appropriate control of Kosovo's internal boundaries, external borders and recognized crossing points. KFOR reinforced control on the external border with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to deter and interdict cross-border infiltration. In the first part of the reporting period, about 25 suspected members of the National Liberation Army/ethnic Albanian armed groups were detained and, during the last 10 days of March, over 200 suspected members were detained and quantities of arms, mines, grenades and radios confiscated.

14. In the Presevo Valley and throughout the Ground Safety Zone, firefights, small arms and mortar fire were reported on a daily basis. A ceasefire was negotiated following heavy armed exchanges, but was breached several times. The areas most

concerned were Lucane, Car, Turija, Sveti Ilija, Gornji Vrtogos, Maxhere, Cerevajka, Ilince, Kurbalija, Dobrosin and Konculj Janovac. The heaviest fighting took place between 9 and 12 March and again between 24 and 28 March. On 7 March, forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia were involved in a landmine accident in Orovica, just outside the Ground Safety Zone, which killed two and injured two others. Ethnic Albanian armed groups confirmed their responsibility in the seizure of four Serbs from Trnovac on 3 March, and captured two Yugoslav Army soldiers on 22 March bringing the number of Serb hostages being held by the ethnic Albanian armed groups/UCPMB to six. There have been numerous reports of groups of armed men in black battledress moving around in the Ground Safety Zone and involved in trench construction, resupplying, training, and laying defensive minefields.

15. KFOR continued to take action to prevent the illegal flow of supplies from inside Kosovo, increased its monitoring of the boundary, and refused to allow ethnic Albanian males of military age to cross into the Presevo Valley.

Security Council resolution 1160 (1998)

16. Although KFOR operations continue to result in weapons seizures there have been no reported violations of resolution 1160 (1998).

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

17. Over the reporting period, no cases of non-compliance were reported in the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC). The KPC personnel establishment stands at 4,667 members, 115 of whom are from ethnic minorities. Thirty new members were included in March. The initiative to have all members registered with the International Organization for Migration and to have personal data verified continues.

18. The restructuring and training plan for the demobilization and transformation of the KPC reservists was discussed at the second joint KFOR-KPC Commanders' Conference held on 27 March. The new UNMIK KPC Administrator is responsible for ensuring continuity and consistency in UNMIK dealings with the Corps. The International Organization for Migration continues to approve projects related to the Kosovo Protection Corps which include community humanitarian initiatives and small improvements to KPC infrastructure. The engagement of the Corps in humanitarian work projects continues. Fifty-four out of 72 projects have been approved, 39 of which deal with humanitarian and 15 with infrastructure issues. Currently, the Kosovo Protection Corps is developing plans for the "Clean up Kosovo Day" campaign.

19. Security forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia remain in general compliance with the terms of the Military Technical Agreement.

Cooperation with international organizations

20. KFOR continues to provide daily assistance to international organizations and non-governmental organizations throughout Kosovo, on request, and to provide security assistance in support of UNMIK police operations. In addition, KFOR troops continue to support safe conditions for minority returns, and to advise and assist the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in planning for the

Kosovo-wide elections. The transfer of railway operations from KFOR to UNMIK was effected on 2 March; they had been under military control since July 1999.

Return of refugees and displaced persons

21. Following the UNMIK appeal last winter that returns be postponed until Spring 2001, only 1,475 refugees and displaced persons returned to Kosovo in January and February. Refugee returns in March had increased to 1,720.

22. UNHCR estimates that 8,500 refugees from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia made their way into Kosovo during February and March, largely in response to the armed activities of the ethnic Albanian armed groups.

Outlook

23. The security situation in Kosovo has been adversely affected by the violence in the northern area of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and has increased the risk to KFOR personnel.